



## **APPRENTICESHIPS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The University of Buckingham aims to provide its students and staff with an excellent learning environment that supports a thriving community of learning, teaching, research and study.
- 1.2 Managers are encouraged to consider carefully the development potential of individuals and the long term needs of the School or Professional Services Department when considering requests for learning and development by any member of staff.
- 1.3 This policy encompasses the learning and teaching experience of students, the university's Peer Observation Scheme for academic and learning support staff, professional development opportunities for teaching and learning staff, and support provided to tutors engaged in the management, delivery and assessment of apprenticeships.
- 1.4 The policy is informed by the QAA Quality Code, the ESFA Apprenticeship Funding Rules for Training Providers, the Ofsted EIF and ITE frameworks and the UK Professional Standards Framework.
- 1.5 The University places the student experience at the centre of learning and teaching and is committed to the enhancement of its provision supported by the professional development of its staff.
- 1.6 To achieve this excellent quality the university prioritises professional development where it will have the most impact on the learning experiences of its students.

### **2. Purpose and Scope**

- 2.1 This Policy is applicable to all university academic staff engaged in the management, design, planning, and delivery of academic programmes and staff engaged in the management and delivery of learning support services.
- 2.2 Employees of the University should be encouraged to request learning and development opportunities which they, or their line managers, believe will improve their effectiveness in the organisation or the performance of the organisation. These may take the form of:
  - Accredited programmes leading to qualifications;
  - Unaccredited training to help individuals develop specific skills relevant to their job (this may include project work, job shadowing opportunities, online courses or webinars, external and UoB led training courses etc.);
  - Statutory training which is required by the role (e.g. Health and Safety, Prevent, Fire Safety, Equality & Diversity, HESA etc);
  - Sector-knowledge events (conferences etc); or
  - Research activity, normally with a view to publication in appropriate peer-reviewed journals and/or presentations at national and/or international conferences. (Note that this should continue to be managed via the already-established process of submission to the University Research Committee or funded directly by the School/department concerned).
- 2.3 This policy aims to inform Buckingham University students and staff about the processes and procedures it has put in place to enhance the quality of its teaching and learning through the professional development of its staff

- 2.4 It includes the potential for a broad range of professional development activities including, online training, shadowing, attendance at conferences, short courses, study for professional awards, apprenticeships, coaching, mentoring, traineeships and secondments.

### **3. Principles**

- 3.1 To ensure that the student experience is at the centre of the University's approach to learning and teaching.
- 3.2. To provide students, academic staff and staff that support student learning with a clear understanding of the processes and procedures followed by the university in its strategic and local support for the professional development of its teaching and support staff.
- 3.3 To provide students with consistently high-quality opportunities to develop their knowledge skills, behaviours and transferable skills whilst studying at the university.
- 3.4 To ensure that all university staff engaged in the management, planning, delivery and support of student learning are appropriately qualified and equipped to make a significant and valued contribution to the learning experiences of students.
- 3.5 To ensure staff are provided with opportunities to engage in professional development, meet their full potential, enhance their careers, make a full and valued contribution to the support of student learning and to their departments within the university.
- 3.6 To provide a structured approach to professional development that ensures it is aligned to the strategic objectives of the University and the needs of its Departments/Schools.
- 3.7 To have in place clearly understood and consistent processes and procedures that enable fair and equitable access to professional development opportunities and the transparent allocation of professional development resources.
- 3.8 To monitor and review professional development to ensure that it responds to the needs of the university's diverse community and that it is allocated equitably.
- 3.9 To assess the impact of professional development and its strategic alignment to learning and teaching priorities as identified in the University's Annual Quality Improvement Plans.
- 3.10 To develop a strategically driven professional development plan that identifies and prioritises areas where support for learning and teaching is required.
- 3.11 To ensure that all academic staff understand the expectations of the Ofsted EIF and ITE framework, QAA, FHEQ and the QAA Quality Code and that staff development is strategically aligned to meeting these expectations.

### **4. Responsibilities**

- 4.1 This section provides information about the roles and responsibilities of employees, their managers, and the administration of professional development opportunities.
- 4.2 The Head of Human Resources will administer the university staff development budget in accordance with the Learning and Development Strategy and ensure that it is deployed to meet the strategic objectives of the University. They will also oversee and

monitor the procedures put in place for the allocation of the fund to ensure that they are transparent, consistently applied and are fair and equitable.

#### 4.3 Line Mangers will:

- Discuss learning and development needs as part of the Personal Development Review (PDR). Individual development objectives should align with the organisational goals.
- Use Peer Observation Scheme and other relevant means to identify the professional development needs of staff engaged in the support of learning and the delivery of teaching to students.
- Assist their staff to apply for professional development opportunities and where appropriate make representations to the university in their support.

#### 4.4 All staff are expected to:

- fully engage in the university's professional and peer review processes and procedures;
- proactively engage in a continual cycle of reflective practice and actively seek to enhance their performance by engaging in professional development;
- maintain a standard of performance that is commensurate with expectations of their role and responsibilities; and
- where recommended by their line manager access or attend, and fully participate in identified staff development activities.

#### 4.5 Deans will:

- Ensure that professional development funding opportunities and the processes and procedures put in place to apply for them are clearly communicated to all staff within the School.
- At the start of the academic period engage staff and student representatives in the strategic review of the School's teaching and learning to identify priorities for professional development. Report these findings to the University Learning & Teaching Committee (ULTC).
- Align the School's professional development needs for teaching and learning to the priorities identified by the University's Annual Quality Enhancement Plan.
- Ensure that the School's Staff Appraisal Scheme, Peer Observation and Staff Developmental Meetings are scheduled and conducted appropriately by line managers within the School.
- Monitor and report to staff and student representatives the outcome of applications for staff development.
- Maintain an overview of ongoing staff development needs, support applications as required, and review the outcome of staff development applications throughout the academic period.

- Regularly review the School's applications and successful bids for professional development to ensure they reflect the needs of a diverse community of staff and students and that there is an equitable distribution.

## 5. Qualifications Support

- 5.1 It is anticipated that **full support** will be provided in the following scenarios:
- Where attainment of a professional or other qualification is a requirement of the role; or
  - Where individuals wish to study part-time for a professional or other qualification directly related to their role, where this is deemed appropriate and beneficial by the manager, and where there is sufficient funding available.
- 5.2 All newly appointed academic staff will be provided with a thorough introduction to the policies and regulations of the university and the processes and procedures that are employed to provide its students with high quality learning experiences.
- 5.3 All newly appointed staff with a teaching or learning support role that are new to teaching or have limited experience will be encouraged to work towards a professional qualification in teaching and learning.
- 5.4 Newly appointed staff will also be appointed an established member of staff as their mentor to assist them to acclimatize to their roles and responsibilities. Their line manager will also provide them with advice and guidance and introduce them to the procedures employed by the university to enhance the quality of its learning and teaching. The line manager will also be responsible for developing their knowledge and understanding of external quality frameworks, including the, Office for Students, the Quality Assurance Agency, the QAA Quality Code and the FHEQ.
- 5.5 With the exception of PhD students and Graduate Teaching Assistant's, that may have roles supporting the learning of students, all established staff should have an academic award at least one level above the one that their students are aiming to achieve.

## 6. Peer Observation Policy

- 6.1 The University of Buckingham is committed to deliver high quality teaching to its students and has developed a Peer Observation Scheme (POS) for its academic and learning support staff.
- 6.2 The Peer Observation Scheme is a collaborative engagement undertaken by academic peers and is intended to promote a culture of reflective practice informed by professional dialogue. The Scheme is designed to be mutually beneficial to both the observer and the observee, and identify professional development needs and good practice.
- 6.3 Scope

The policy applies to all academic staff that make a teaching contribution of over 20 hours in an academic year and is open to all staff that support the learning of students. It is a mandatory requirement that all staff that regularly engage in teaching should participate in the Peer Observation Scheme once every academic year. It is also a requirement for PhD students and GTA's that engage in teaching and/or the support of learning to participate in the scheme and it may be linked to studies for professional teaching awards.

## 6.4 Principles

Peer Observation should:

- through a consistently applied institutional process provide a fair and supportive approach to peer observation that aims to enhance the quality of teaching and learning;
- promote reflective practice supported by constructive dialogue between peers;
- enhance the quality of teaching by identifying and disseminating good practice in teaching and learning;
- support staff to identify their strengths and areas for improvement in order to enhance the learning experiences of students; and
- Findings should inform the Faculty Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement plan as required.

## 6.5 Procedure

6.5.1 Deans / Associate Deans are responsible for peer observations within their School and for monitoring staff participation in the scheme.

6.5.2 Every member of the teaching staff should be peer observed every year. In any one-year period peer observations should not be reciprocal and a different pairing will be expected in subsequent years.

6.5.3 Staff should agree to pair together and decide who will be the observer and who will be observed. They should inform their Dean/Associate Dean of their pairing and the date set for the observation.

6.5.4 The process for Peer Observation is divided into three linked events:

- Initial Briefing
- Observation
- Debriefing

6.5.5 During the Initial Briefing, the observer and observe should discuss:

- The nature and type of session where the learning and teaching will take place (Lecture, Seminar, Tutorial etc.)
- Where the teaching session will take place
- The aims of the session
- The approach that will be taken to deliver the teaching and facilitate learning.
- Any areas of the delivery where the observer may wish to focus
- Any areas where innovation may be evident
- The date and time should be set for the observation and any logistical arrangements including informing students.

6.5.6 The observation is usually conducted with one observer at a session delivered by one tutor. The event should be observed for about an hour to provide time for a full and fair experience of the session.

6.5.6 The observer should be present at the start of a session being observed to ensure they experience the teacher's introductory remarks to students in order to fully understand the context of the session.

6.5.7 The observer should not position themselves in a distracting or intimidating position but locate themselves where they can clearly observe the event and the interaction between the teacher and the students.

- 6.5.8 All notes made during the session should be kept private and should only be used in the debriefing to the observee.
- 6.5.9 The peer observer should use the peer observation form (Appendix 1) to record their observations and these notes should be written up using the form as soon as possible after the session
- 6.5.10 As soon as is possible after the session, the observer and observee should meet to discuss the session.
- 6.5.11 These discussions should promote a reflective engagement between the observer's perception and those of the observee about the session. They may focus on how and to what extent the aims of the learning were achieved? How the session was introduced? The manner and level of communication, the clarity and pace of the delivery, the promotion of any interactions and the overall management of the student experience, and any other matters that are relevant to the learning and teaching that took place.
- 6.5.12 The completed peer observation form should be retained by the observee and a copy sent to the Dean/Associate Dean for file.
- 6.5.13 The Dean/Associate Dean may use this information to inform the strategic plan of the School and its professional development needs, **but where possible the individual identity of staff should be kept confidential.** The faculty Dean/Associate Dean may also use this anonymised data to make recommendations to relevant University Committees or in cases of good practice may, with the permission of the observee, credit them directly with the use of innovative good practice.

## **7. Support for Apprenticeship Tutors and Assessors**

- 7.1 All apprenticeship assessors should be fully supported and trained to meet the expectations of their role and responsibilities.
- 7.2 Apprentice tutors and assessors should be supported to:
- gain an understanding of how apprenticeship standards are developed, and the role played by The Institute for Apprenticeships, Trailblazers, Employers, Training Providers, End Point Assessment (EPA) Organisations (EPAO) and Quality Assurance organisations (AQA);
  - understand the format, level and expectations encompassed with an apprenticeship standard and the standard's assessment plan;
  - understand the assessment process for apprentices including the requirements and expectations of the Gateway and End Point Assessment;
  - explore the pedagogy that supports apprenticeship learning, including the use of blended learning: the skills required to facilitate learning online, the development of learning material for distance learning, online tutorial support, and how to manage an interactive virtual learning environment;
  - develop the skills required to map an academic programme of study to the expectations of an apprenticeship standard;
  - align an apprenticeship experience to the expectations of a professional body in order to gain accreditation after the end point assessment, (details of professional bodies associated with an apprenticeship standard are listed in the apprenticeship End Point Assessment Plan);

- interpret End Point Assessment Plans and formulate appropriate assessment tasks, questions, interviews and examinations to appropriately test knowledge, skills and behaviours set against the level and expectations of an apprenticeship standard;
- recognise the importance of maintaining a close relationship with employers to ensure that the admission process for apprentices follow the regulations as set out in the, ESFA, Apprenticeship Funding Rules for Training Providers, Version 2 (August 2018 to July 2019), including the accurate accreditation of prior learning and experience;
- conduct regular review meetings with apprentices to assess and record their progress, examine and map the apprentice's developing knowledge, skills and behaviours to their work-based employment, review previously set objectives, encourage the apprentice to reflect on their learning and set new objectives;
- be aware of the apprenticeship experience and the division of responsibilities between employers and training providers; and
- be made aware of the expectation of support from the employer with the provision of time, normally 20% of the apprenticeship experience allocated to off the job learning.

### Authorisation



Mr Christopher Payne  
Registrar & Director of Professional Services

## APPENDIX 1: PEER OBSERVATION FORM

(Reviewer to complete)

**Drawing conclusions:** The reviewer and reviewee should engage in a professional dialogue and jointly reach agreement on the overall quality of learning and teaching as well as on any areas of good practice and/or development.

<b>Reviewer</b>		<b>Reviewee</b>	
<b>School</b>		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Evaluation of the lesson</b>			
<b>Areas of good practice and key strengths</b>			
<b>Areas for development</b>			